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MONTHLY REPORT  
ON  
THE PROGRESS OF THERAPEUTICS.

*Edited for the Edinburgh Medical Journal.*

No. XXVII.—February 1877.

BY

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# MONTHLY REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THERAPEUTICS.

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(Reprinted from the *Edinburgh Medical Journal* for February 1877.)

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**BROMIDE OF SODIUM.**—Dr W. A. Hollis records eleven cases of epilepsy in which most favourable results were obtained with bromide of sodium. He gives from 15 to 40 grains of the salt in an ounce of camphor water, or other vehicle, thrice daily. For a child two years old, he advises the administration of three grains in two drachms of decoct. cinch. pallid. three times a day. Dr Hollis observes that the salt appears to exert a greater influence on the so-called “convulsions” of children than it does on the more confirmed epilepsy of adult age.—*British Medical Journal*, 1st July.

**USES OF LARGE NON-EMETIC DOSES OF IPECACUANHA.**—In two pamphlets on this subject, Dr Alfred A. Woodhull records his experience of this treatment in dysentery and intermittent fever. In dysentery, he first quiets the stomach, which should be empty, with opium, and then gives a large dose of ipecacuanha (25 or 30 grains). The recumbent posture and abstinence from food or drink for at least four hours should be strictly enjoined. The dose may be repeated in from two to six hours. He thinks that when the stomach is empty the medicine acts non-emetically in direct proportion to the severity of the attack. Of twenty-three cases of intermittent fever treated by ipecacuanha in doses of from 1 to 20 grains, all were cured but one. Dr Woodhull thinks that one or two grains, given every three or four hours, is the best method for ordinary chills. Large doses did not appear to exercise a beneficial effect in proportion to their size. If large doses be used, it is well to guard them with small quantities of opium, and to observe the precautions of recumbent rest and abstinence.

**APOMORPHIA.**—Jurasz of Heidelberg finds that solutions of apomorphia will keep for several months; they gradually become dark green, but do not lose their emetic power. Subcutaneous injection produces no ill effects beyond slight local redness. Jurasz prefers the skin of the back as the site for injection; he uses a one per cent. solution. It should be very cautiously employed in the case of children, too large doses being apt to produce violent vomiting and symptoms of collapse. For children ten years of age, he advises a dose of one-tenth of a grain. As a rule, vomiting comes on in about ten minutes, and all disagreeable symptoms dis-



appear in one or two hours. After the vomiting there is a disposition to sleep, and symptoms of depression. Salivation and sweating continue for some little time. It has been found useful in croup, bronchitis, and capillary bronchiolitis in children; and in emphysema, with severe bronchitis and dyspnoea in adults.—*Deutsche Archiv für Klin. Med.*, Bd. xvi. i.

ARNICA.—Dr A. Patze, writing in *New Remedies*, June 1876, respecting the use of tincture of arnica externally, states that, according to Schuchardt, experiments with arnica have yielded the following results:—Small doses accelerate the pulse, raise the temperature of the skin, increase the secretion of urine, and cause tremor of muscles. The violence of these symptoms increases with augmentation of the dose. Injections of an infusion of the flowers into the veins caused much excitement, followed by intense languidness, vertigo, and even death: on examination, the organs of the chest and abdomen, and the cerebrum and spine, were found engorged with blood. In man, any part of the arnica plant applied to the skin causes an itching, burning sensation, accompanied by redness. Small doses of from 4 to 10 grains exert an irritating effect on the fauces and larynx, and on the stomach and alimentary canal, causing a burning, scratching sensation, cardialgia, abdominal pains, nausea, vomiting, and frequent evacuations; the circulation is quickened, and the bodily warmth is increased; the secretions also are increased, especially those of the kidneys, skin, and lungs. Continued use of it will cause numbness of the head, vertigo, mental depression, restless sleep, oppression of the lungs, jerking pains, etc. The hot infusion acts more surely than the tincture, and the flowers are more exciting than the root. Arnica may be indicated in diseases which manifest a character of torpor, or whenever an acceleration of the circulation is desirable. In Germany it is extensively used, especially in cases where the vitality of the nerve-centres, brain and spine, is oppressed; in exhaustion, paralysis consequent on apoplectic strokes, rheumatism, catarrh, pleurisy, pneumonia, in traumatic commotions of the brain, in typhoid fevers with torpor, in paralytic affections, etc. The external use of it is very limited, and it is especially contraindicated in recent traumatic cases. It should never be applied before all tendency to inflammation is removed. About seven days after the injury, Dr Patze advises its application in the following form:—

R. Tinct. flor. arnicæ, ℥ss.

Aceti ℥ss.

Aq. camph. ℥vi.

M. Sig. "For external use."

COLCHICUM.—According to J. Rossbach, colchicum produces complete loss of sensibility from paralysis of the peripheric and centric nerve-endings. Reflex excitability is consequently abolished. On the other hand, the motor nerves and the muscles retain their excit-



ability. In many animals the paralysis is preceded by a stage of excitation. The circulation is only slightly affected, and the heart continues to pulsate even after paralysis of the central nervous system has commenced. The blood-pressure long remains unchanged, and paralysis of the inhibitory nerves of the heart occurs at a late period. The respirations gradually become less and less, until they are completely arrested; hence it is concluded that there is gradual paralysis of the respiratory centre. In warm-blooded animals, the whole alimentary mucous membrane is swollen and strongly injected, and the intestine contains bloody mucus; there is diarrhoea, vomiting, and colicky pains; the kidneys are strongly hyperæmic, and their secretion is diminished. The action of colchicum is very slow, and it is remarkable that the amount of the dose has scarcely any perceptible influence on the intensity or rapidity of its action; doses smaller than are sufficient to cause death have scarcely any action.—*Pflüger's Archiv*, B. 22.

**HYDROBROMATE OF CICUTINE.**—Dujardin Beaumetz considers that cicutine and its salts affect the nervous system in the same manner as curare, but the pneumogastric nerve is affected by the former drug. Cicutine salts may be given in convulsive affections, and particularly for reflex symptoms connected with the pneumogastric nerve. Thus, they may be of service in convulsive cough, asthma, hooping-cough, in certain forms of hiccup in dysphagia, vomiting, etc. Also in the convulsions of tetanus, in infantile convulsions, in chorea, and in neuralgia. Cicutine is best given hypodermically; when thus administered, hemlock appears to act very differently to what it does when given by the stomach, the intestinal juices apparently destroying, in a certain degree, the properties of the drug. A very small quantity used hypodermically will produce a greater effect than a considerable dose taken by the mouth.—*Bull. Gen. de Thér.*, 15th July 1876.

M. Mourrut of Paris has succeeded in obtaining crystals of hydrobromate of cicutine or conia by directly combining the hydrobromic acid with the alkaloid. The salt crystallizes in colourless prismatic needles, and, unlike the other salts of cicutine, is stable and not deliquescent. The crystals are very soluble in water and alcohol, are inodorous and almost tasteless. Its effects on the lower animals were to produce paralysis and sleep. During the greatest depression, the respirations and beats of the heart were distinctly perceived, and there was no serious impairment of sensation. From the observations of Dr Landur, it would appear that the salt is likely to prove useful in hooping-cough, asthma, cough of phthisis, and the pains of dentition. He gave it in doses of two milligrammes for children one year old, and one centigramme for adults. Dr Regnault administered it hypodermically in a case of sciatica; after two injections the pain ceased. He also gave it with success in a dose of three milligrammes to a phthisical patient suffering from neuralgia.—*Bull. Gen. de Thér.*, 30th May 1876.



**DATURIA.**—The following are the conclusions of Jobert relative to the mydriatic action of daturia. It is three times as active as atropia, and hence its dose should be one-third less. When introduced between the lids it does not cause pain or confusion of vision which attend the similar use of belladonna. Its effects are more constant, and its action is more persistent.—*New Remedies*, June 1876.

**DIGITALIS.**—Last year MM. Feltz and Ritter communicated to the French Academy of Sciences the results of their investigations as regards the action of digitalis and of the biliary salts. The biliary salts, and infusion of digitalis in non-poisonous doses, lower the temperature about 1° C. The arterial tension is lessened by both, but more so by the digitalis. They both render the respirations slightly irregular. The pulse is lowered by both, but in the case of digitalis the descent lasts a very short time, and is followed by acceleration; in the case of the biliary salts the descent lasts a much longer time, and is not followed by an abnormal elevation. Animals that are put under the influence of the biliary salts lose less of their weight than those that are digitalized. In poisoning animals with the biliary salts and with digitalis, in cases in which the pneumogastric and sympathetic nerves have been divided, the pulse is affected in the first case, and not in the second, while the temperature and respiration remain the same. The authors conclude from this, and from other considerations, that the effect of digitalis is exerted more on the nervous system than upon the blood and muscular tissue, and that the reverse is the case with the biliary salts. In animals poisoned with digitalis, they always found the heart in a state of relaxation, and never in that condition of tetanic rigidity characteristic of poisoning by the biliary salts. These two poisons have hitherto been supposed to be almost identical in action.

**LUPINE.**—Seeds of *Lupinus sativus*, or white lupine, are employed as an emmenagogue, vermifuge, and, externally, in resolvent poultices. According to R. Bellini, the seeds contain an active principle, soluble in water; this is toxic, both to man and the lower animals, but is not directly irritant to surfaces to which it is applied. When it passes into the circulation, it exerts an enfeebling action on the brain, the vaso-motor, and the sensory nerves of the voluntary muscles, and on the muscular fibres, the peripheral expansions of the sensory nerves being the parts most affected. This depressing action lasts only while the poison is in the organism, and is counteracted by stimulants. Decoction of lupine should not be used as a toxic or vermifuge, but as a parasiticide it may be employed externally without danger.—*New Remedies*, June 1876.









